

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 19 and 27-36 remain in this application. Claims 1-18, 20-26 and 37-49 have been cancelled, without prejudice.

Allowable Subject Matter

As noted previously, Claim 19 stands allowed.

In addition, the Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication of allowability regarding Claims 27-29. Per the Examiner's indication at page 5 of the Office Action most recently received, Claim 27 has been re-written into independent form. Claims 28-29 depend from Claim 27.

Claim 30 has been amended so as to now depend from Claim 27, and thus, Claim 30 is believed to be allowable. Claims 31-36 depend, directly or indirectly, from Claim 30. Claim 34 has also been amended to address the Examiner's objection set forth at page of the Office Action. Thus, Claims 30-36 too are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Applicants are making the above-referenced amendments, particularly the amendment to Claim 26, to facilitate the allowance of the present application and not to overcome any prior art reference. That is, the Applicants do not concede that the amendments are necessary to overcome the prior art and reserve the right to pursue any of the amended or cancelled claims, including Claim 26, in their original form in a subsequent application.

Claim rejections – 35 USC 112

Claims 26-42 and 45-49 were rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite.

Claim 26 has been cancelled. Claims 27, 29 and 30 have been amended per the Examiner's indication. The remaining claims either depend from these claims, or have been cancelled, and as such the rejection of the remaining claims is believed to be moot.

Claim rejections – 35 USC 103(a)

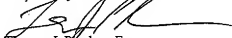
Claim 26 is rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hisada, US Patent 5,893,424. Additionally, Claims 30-42 and 44-49 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hisada, US Patent 5,893,424 in view of Rondeau et al. US Publication 2003/0102694 and further in view of Maki et al., US Patent 6,270,106 B1.

In view of the amendments to the Claims, the rejection of these claims is believed to be moot.

Conclusion

The Applicants believe that the amendment and cancellation of claims, and the above comments, puts the application in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned should further issues remain. Otherwise, speedy and favorable consideration is respectfully requested. A two-month extension fee of \$450.00 is believed to be due for the filing of this Amendment and Response, and this fee should be charged to Deposit Account 23-2053. Any required petition should be considered provisionally made.

Respectfully submitted,



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Dated: April 2nd, 2007

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